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A Few Candidates For Letters of Marque

By ROBERT C. RUARK.

A few days ago a fellow by the name of Lyle H. Munson asked Congress for a letter of marque and reprisal. In net effect such a document gives you the legal right to operate pretty much as a pirate.



Robert C. Ruark

Munson evidently has no such designs but what he wants to do is interesting. The man has the idea that the United States government has fallen on its face where American prisoners are concerned—Cuba, for a starter—and figures the next time it happens, he can tool in there with a helicopter and a few hardy souls armed with ping-pong paddles and spring a few fellow citizens loose.

This doesn't sound like a scheme that would meet with great approval by the various life insurance companies but Mr. Munson—love the name Lyle for an adventurer, by the way—has received hundreds of phone calls from volunteers. Well, I don't think it's the heat that got to Munson because he appears to be well-grounded in the cloak-and-dagger stuff since he served in both the OSS and CIA.

One volunteer he ain't going to get is a burglar who broke into a home in Yonkers—what are Yonkers?—and got scared off by a lady who threw a pillow at him. They just ain't making house-breakers the way they used to. Built-in obsolescence. No sooner do you get your new burglar well-broken in than they come out with a new model. You want to go around with last year's burglar and have all of your neighbors looking down their noses at you?

I hope Mr. Munson isn't too discouraged because there are reports on some really intrepid types who might just fit into his table of organization. Like there's a guy named Joseph Siniscalchi—out on Long Island and there's a bird that has a grudge against him.

The very second Joe steps outside there's this bird buzzing him. It doesn't hate anyone else in his family. Joseph has no known enemies except this bird.

What pleases me is that Joseph Siniscalchi is not spiked. Said he: "It made me mad for a while. I guess it's a friend now. I think I'd miss it if it didn't show up." A man with a heart of oak.

* * *

Now if Mr. Munson isn't pleased with this starter I propose the names of three lawyers who represented the Teamsters in their efforts to boot out Jimmy Hoffa. They asked for a small fee of only \$350,000 and just won a lawsuit which pared this down to a lousy \$210,000. Good solid men.

And if all else fails the Navy has developed a machine that can learn.

I am not terribly clear about how this machine works but it seems to have a brain that actually learns as time goes by and doesn't need a faint fumbling hand of man to help it. The story says "It holds promise of being able to read, write and talk and even to produce itself if given the necessary tools." This the Navy says.

Well I have a suggestion. The Navy should really crash-program this machine so we can bail out some citizens, stop the killing in the Middle East, cure cancer, knock off heart trouble and last but not leastly important—

Keep that damn bird from buzzing Mr. Joseph Siniscalchi. What the machine does with Mr. Hoffa and his lawyers is up to the machine's mind but for the last time, machine, get that bloody bird off Mr. Joseph Siniscalchi's back.

Otherwise, take me to your leader.

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